



Metamorphosis

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To re shape one's orientation to what the environment calls for :

Entering into this intense process of study and work called an MFA program, I have to recognize that I am a mover first. I collect information and let it move through, walk beside and run down my body. Through study I ask myself, how can I come towards creating new work, creating new possibilities? This process calls me to question my ways of creating work. How can I be open towards change? What has changed? What does this process ask of me? Where do I begin? What is freedom? What is black dance? How do new ideas I encounter reorient me? In the moment of confronting something new, am I in agreement or not - how do I position myself? How do I confront ideals, modalities that are being taught, that I'm reading about?

I begin here.

W a l k i n g
Today I am walking.
Walking towards an unknown space.
Where internally I feel moments of
resistance towards the unfamiliar.
I'm walking into this space.
Beginning to be open towards
this space and the process of be-
ing in an unfamiliar environment.
I'm still walking.
Step by step, inch by inch,
one foot in front of the other.
The other...
This other space where I feel comfort-
able and uncomfortable at the same
time yet still resist the energy it brings.
I am walking. Towards, against, be-
side the spaces that are here.
I'm walking.
Walking to understand my own insecu-
rities that show up in unfamiliar spaces.
I am.
W a l k i n g .



In order for me to think intensely and profoundly there has to be movement. My pace towards movement begins slow.

The physical has to happen in order for me to relate or understand what is being said. Walking allows me to continuously process the wired thinking that comes along with the questions that unfolded. Walking allows my mind to slow down and gradually process information at a pace that works well alongside my running mind. On these walks I stumble upon these questions that I don't intend to answer but do come closer to

The Unanswered : Where is the movement in your life now?

What is Elsewhere?

What is American?

What is man?

What is being black? What does time/space feel like in black time???

The studio is like a garden. The garden allows possibilities to unfold, and allows new ideas to arise!

Whose mastery?????

What is mastery? Who is the master??

Can you master unlearning?

Potential vs Reality.

How to build vocabulary that will tell the story. Tell the story of black love, black freedom, black joy.

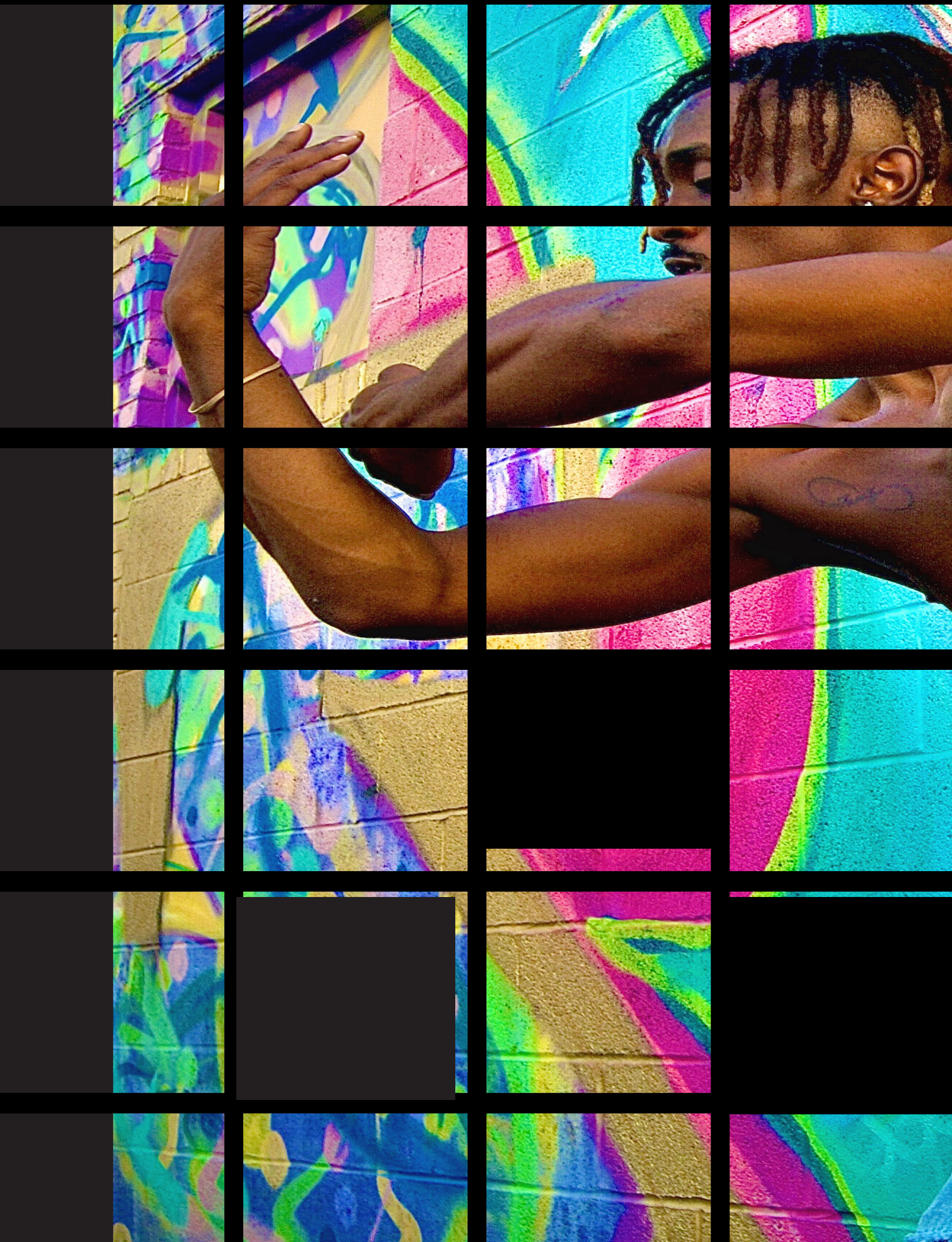
What determines the actions that help bring us closer to love, freedom and joy?

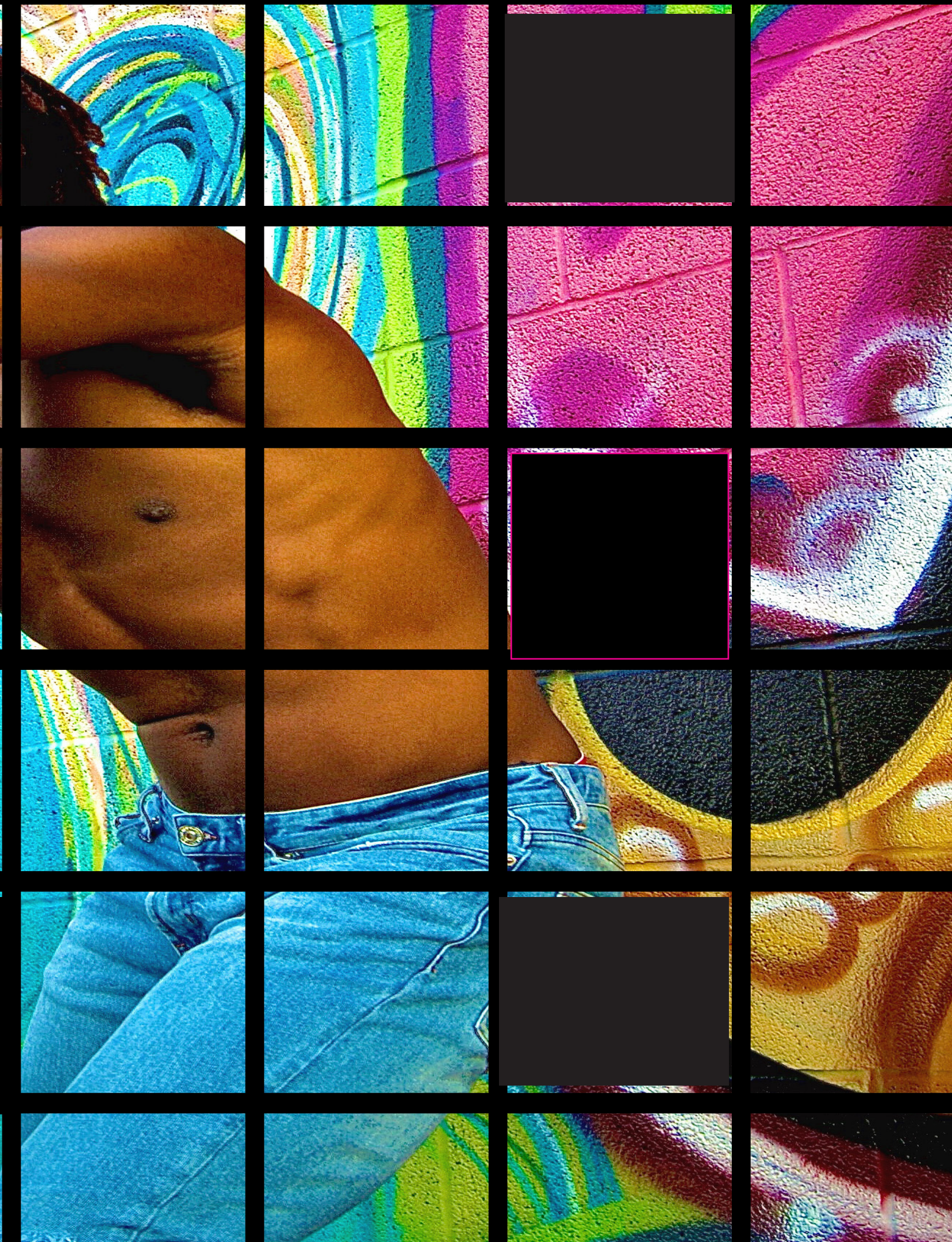
What actions help us choose love, freedom and joy?



Walking slowly,
Walking fast but not too fast because
they will think something.
Walk normally.
Whatever that means.
Walking inward towards my own ways
of understanding self.







I'M CONSTANTLY RUNNING.

My black body finds itself outside more.

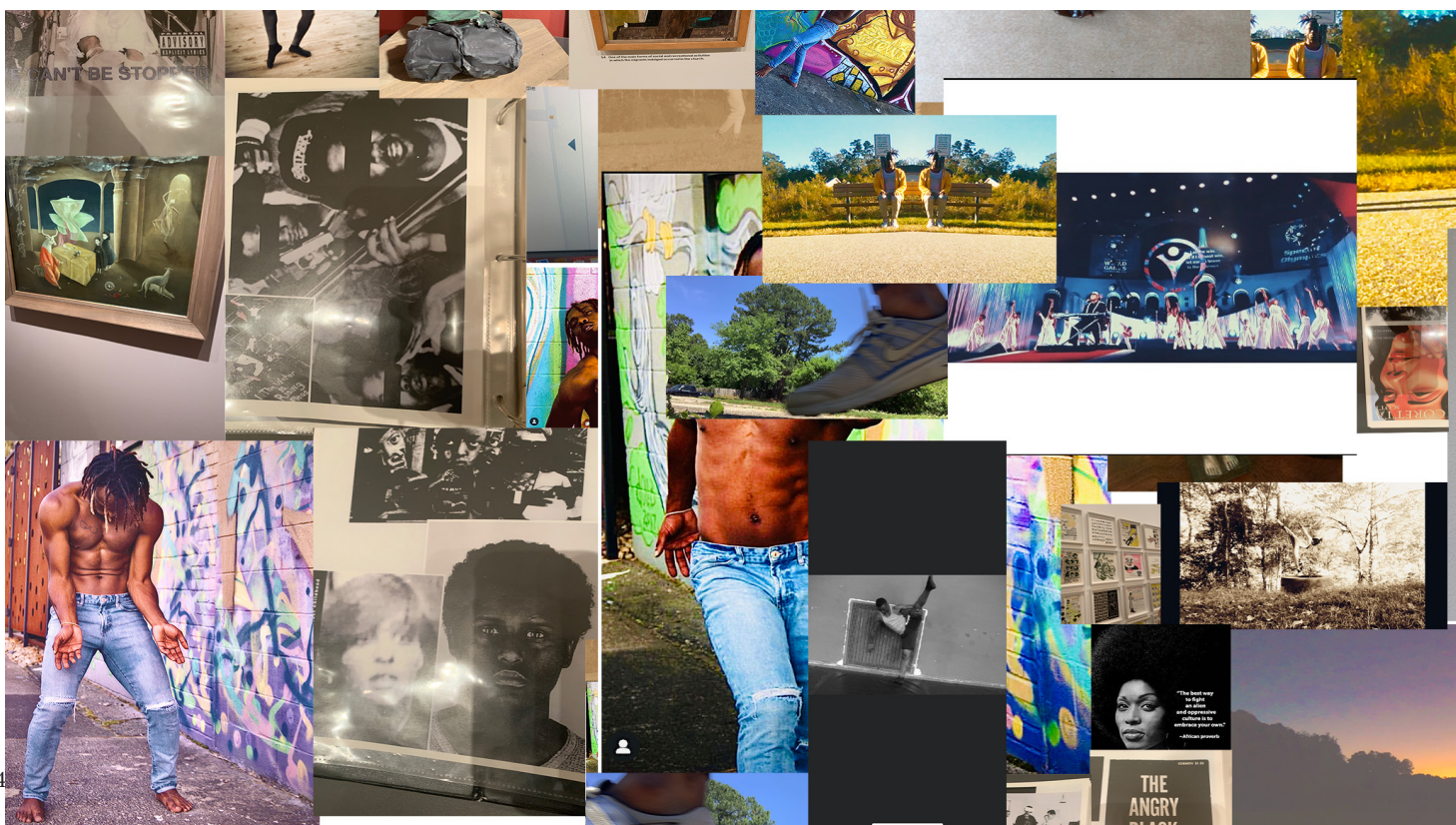
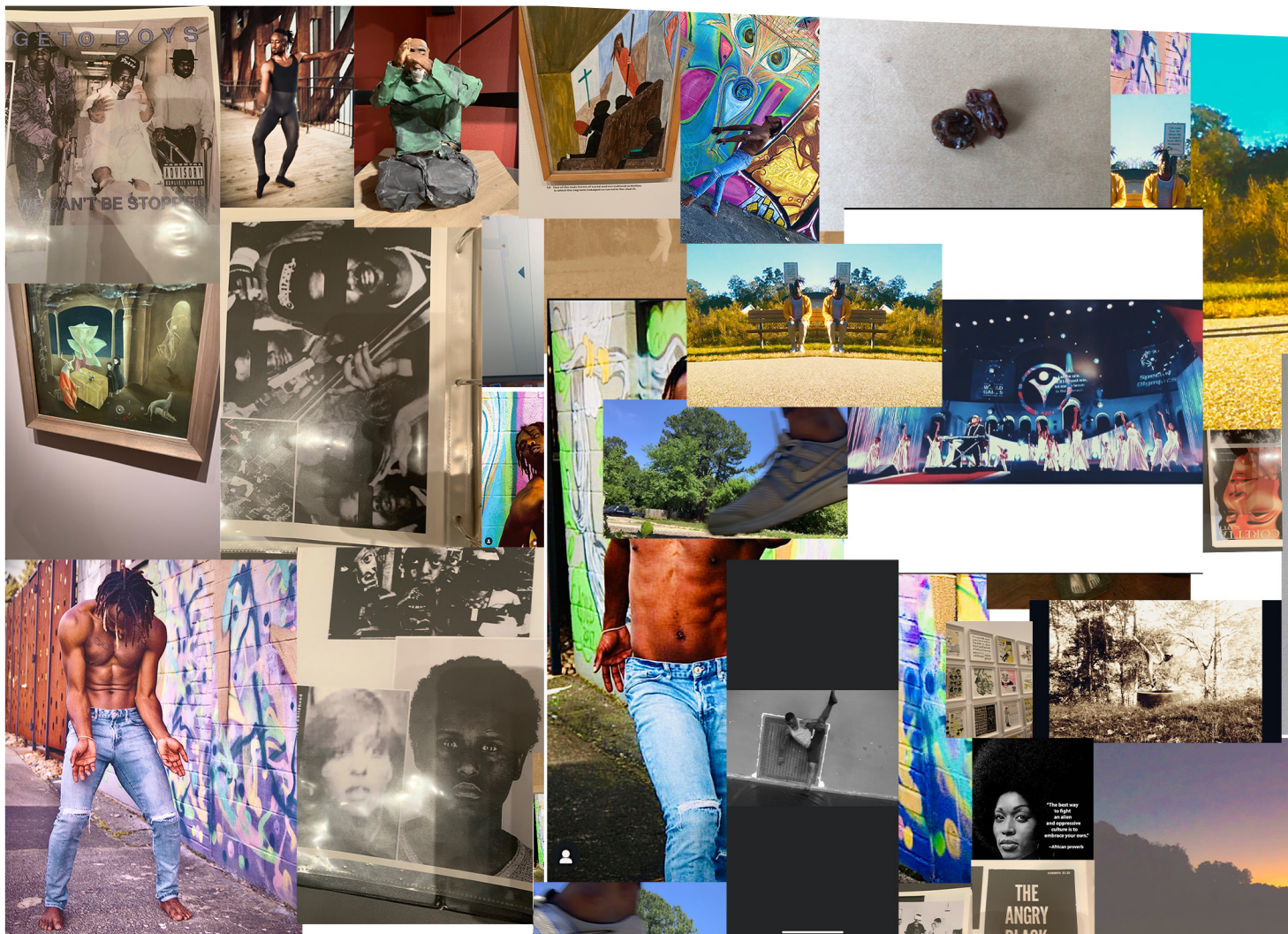
Like a child, being outside becomes a place of exodus where my thoughts and

my body can stay moving and embrace

small freedoms. It's hard though being in this black body.

No matter where this body goes it's always faced with danger.





I'm running.
Towards freedom.
I'm running to paradise.
A place where I can feel AGAPE.
I start with a light jog
breathing in the southern humid and heavy air. Pacing myself,
I start sweating. Wilding my soul with all that's within me
I pick up the pace. Becoming more anxious
at the thought of my black body
becoming another hashtag.
I'm still running towards paradise.
The desire that resides deep within me.
My soul. To wander around eternally,
without any destination or home
in sight.
Sprinting, jolting, dashing in my veins my bones are the craving of
A new path, to start a new adventure.
I am running.
Not for a prize or for any bragging rights.
I'm running towards change.

this practice of running always remember

1. Believe in yourself: Once you conquer your own self doubt you'll be able to get over those hurdles.
2. Set a pace for yourself: No one said you had a deadline so finish on your own timing.
3. Visualize your Finish line: Think of a goal you want to achieve and each time you get towards your beginning/ending marker see yourself accomplishing that goal. Seeing is believing
4. Self motivation: Believing that you can do it is the most important part of running! Talk and prepare yourself every step of the way. Thoughts! Be sure to manifest positivity into your life.



Art is an expression of appreciation of life's existence. To be able to escape the realities of one's existence one has to be able to create their own world where they feel the most freed from all constraints. My elsewhere starts when I'm in the studio space, with music playing, listening to my breath or even standing in an open field with just sun beaming down into my innermost being! My soul! The feeling of bliss and joy all in one, my Utopia. A place where my heart can spread its wings and take flight. Where my heart can let go of the many arrows that have tried to rupture it. This place allows for me to be, open, unlocked, agape in the most freeing way.



What is freedom?

The embodied act of going against self enslavement.

The process of taking control of YOUR own thoughts, feelings, movement. It's the moment where all the parts of self (mind, body, spirit) become connected.

The authentic power of freedom. During the pandemic I had so many emotions overflowing in my mind and heart. I felt heavy, shackled almost to the thought that my everyday freedom would be taken away from me. I kept seeing the bodies that I relate to (black and brown bodies) being killed. Seeing these senseless killings, continued to put a damper on my heart. I felt a multitude of moments where I could've been a Trayvon Martin. I began to go into a deep dark hole, just wanting to let go and react to what's going on. Instead I took ownership by not looking back but looking forward to meeting possibilities that could come up during this time. Driving became one of the only means of control that I had during a time where life felt like a dramatic pause waiting for someone to press play or fast forward to the new world. I began to drive with no destination in mind. I'd park in a open parking lot where I could be in the search of freedom.

Feel the feeling of freedom of choice! Feel the freedom of taking a chance. This practice became my way of creating during a time where the energy of making felt short to none. It gave me a chance to release an energy that I wasn't aware of. The anger, the sadness, the trying to be happy while all this chaos continues.

The BREAK WAS FELT DURING THIS TIME.

(The moment where the drummers change the beat and start the rhythm over. In this moment during the break we feel the shift in the atmosphere, we feel the change and dynamic around us, we feel!!)











J-U-M-P

So I jumped.

Jumped to the idea that I can be.

Any and everything that I want to be.

I leaped towards viewing myself as an eagle.

Soaring high in the sky. Allowing the air to brush up
against my wings.

I jumped up, down, around, and towards the possibili-
ties of what can be.

I leaped towards the unknown.

I'm not scared anymore. I'm not afraid of not knowing
what's next. I'm okay!

So I close my eyes and have faith.

I am enough.

It will be enough.

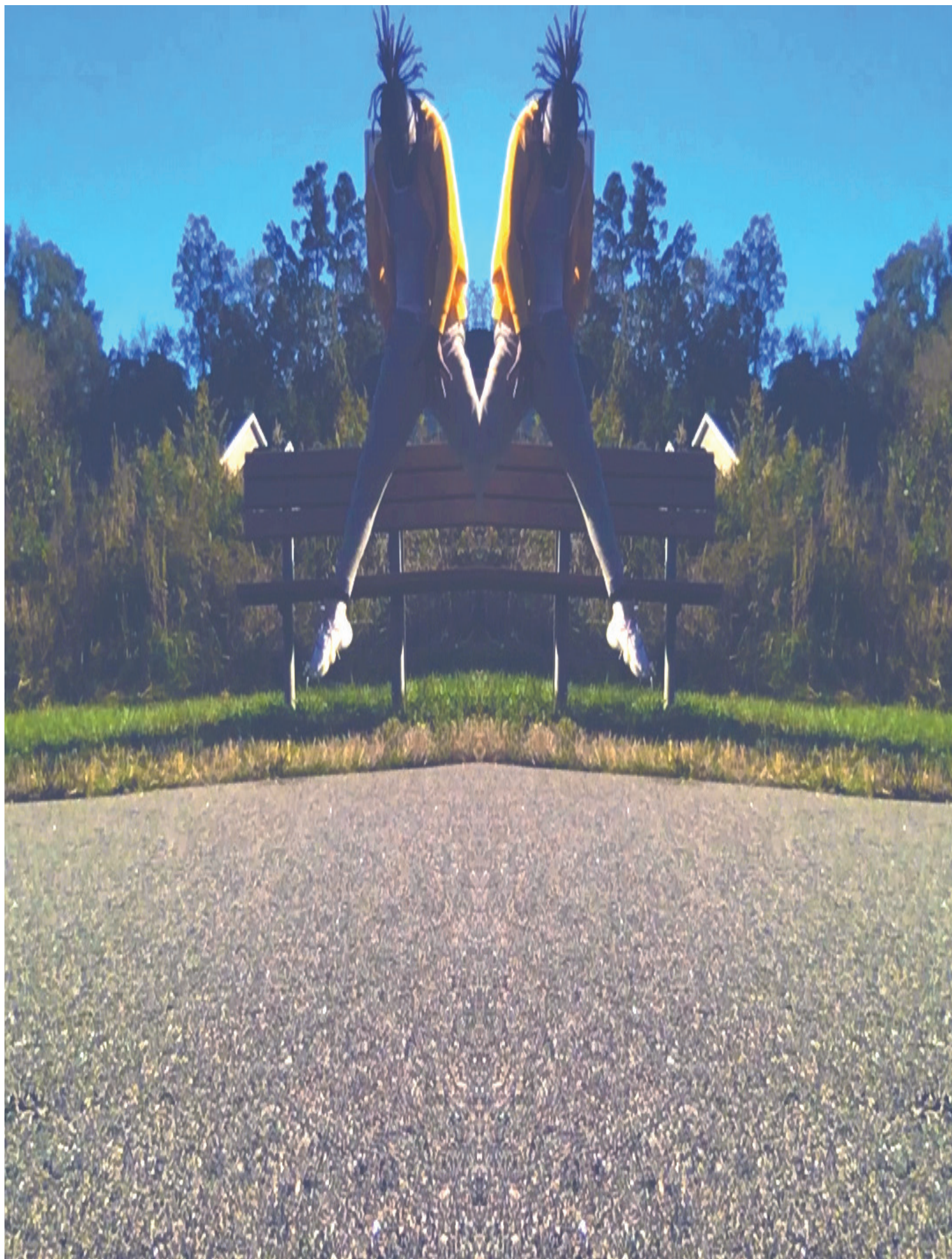
My work will always be enough.

So I jumped.

Into working. Making magic. Not realizing I was mani-
festing choreography.

Movement that started to tell a story. A story of love lost,
hurt, confusion, transmission of emotions that soared
across the red sea.

I jumped and felt tangible.







Lost

lost

LOST

Lost

Lost

Lost

Lost

LOST

The lost home

Together again.

Together we can relearn,

Re-engage, to come home.

I'm here because you are here with me.

Sitting alongside me. Standing not in front but beside me. You've never left my side.

Always calling towards you. My Blackness

Settles Together we meet again. Together we mend the lost languages and history.

Our ancestors dance again.

Together we Dance again!

Together we become more than.

In this moment we feel the unfelt beauty that has been long gone for centuries.

We sing in celebration. We sing to gather all of our ancestors near and far.

We dance the dance to the Sun, Moon and the Water.

This moment will now flow forever in our hearts, minds and spirit.

We are the biggest blessing that our ancestors could've ever imagined.

Together we are home away from home.

No longer lost.

No longer frightened.

No longer in disbelief.

I see you.

I acknowledge you.

To be with you is to be home.

The lost home.

I'm standing.
I'm looking for the something else.
I'm trying to see myself from a new
perspective.
So I mirrored myself.
Seeing my reflection.
Looking inward.

I took two steps forward
and ended up 3 steps back.
I moved my right hand you moved
your left.
My reflection.
My other half.
So I'm
standing.
talking to my reflection.







Im Choosing Black/ness

Blackness.

Blackness as a state of becoming.

A state of transformation. A metamorphosis a cycle of constant change.

Blackness requires a certain amount of grit and courage to stand alone.

In this moment of blackness you sense and feel more than those who don't quite get the identity of BLACK-NESS.

It's a calling.

It's a moment where your mother yells outside it's time to come inside before the street lights come on.

It's the pop on the neck when you're moving too much while getting your hair braided.

It's the cool feeling you get drinking your grandmothers sweet tea.

Blackness.

Blackness becomes a choice. A choice of true freedom.

The practice of blackness and freedom are both intertwined into one logical state of power.

Our great grandparents the true freedom writers of blackness were some of the first to claim this identity of blackness=freedom.

Moving in blackness, singing in blackness, manifesting in blackness are no different than doing anything else while in this state of being Black.

So blackness.

Becomes a living, breathing way of everlasting fight for freedom.



Blackness does; Blackness in-
spires; Blackness confirms and
consecrates.

Blackness allows for,
Race inhibits and constrains.



The body speaks.

The body remembers.

The body tells us what is valued in the cul-
ture.

Bodies are mirrors of politics, art, failing.

Bodies are pulses of histories untold.

What does black dance ask??????

- What is the relationship between black dance , choreographic innovation, and community formation?
- How can we think about the ethics of studying, consuming and practicing black dance?
- What does black dance do????



BLACKNESS.

BLACK POWER.

BLACK LOVE.

BLACK FREEDOM.

BLACK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

THE BLACK BODY S
BERS , IT'S A BODY C
OUR ANCESTORS . T

PEAKS, CRIES, REMEM-
OF PULSES ROOTED BY
THE FIRST RUNNERS OF
AMERICA.

Black Dance Studies

I've chosen this identity of blackness. The idea that blackness, black dance black anything are the way we showcase love, joy, pain, discomfort and a multitude of emotions. However when thinking about black dance it becomes boxed in and categorized and its identity can't reach its full potential. In my opinion black dance "freedom dancing" or "freedom finding" is the way that those who choose to be within the black dance category are in search of the new, the what else can happen in space and time. If I recall correctly I remember being introduced to black dance at a predominantly black high school from a very tall, muscular woman through the teachings of the Lester Horton technique, liturgical dance, jazz dance vocabulary and African dance (West African). Within all of these studies and practices of movement I remember my high school teacher Lisa Wilder speaking as we would start the long Horton warm up sweating after doing the flatback series "dance from a place of truth" "dance from within"; black dancers have to be more than. In those moments I never understood the magnitude those words would bring, ultimately changing the trajectory of how I would view the black dancing body and my own. My teacher gave us tools to mobilize her students to find their artistic voices and find what we wanted to say with our gifts. On countless occasions we were exposed to a variety of dance styles that were different to our everyday practices having ADF (American Dance Festival) instructors come in and teach Merce Cunningham, Release technique, Jose Limon and Katherine Dunham technique. Having these experiences not only expanded our minds but also our physical bodies. I honor her for giving us the chance to see what the black dancing body is capable of!

My belief system changed.

Black dance continues to ignite and push my thought process towards the

future. The topic of “what is black dance” continues an ongoing conversation that began in the 1920’s. Coming closer to myself through the practices of walking, running and jumping I’ve come closer to what I may believe what black dance can be:

Freedom Dancing: The physical manifestation of embodying your mind, body and spirit. The moment where you become more than, you become who you always dreamed of being.

Black dance is always in search of what you can bring to it. It’s never taking from you but always pouring, flowing, breathing life into you. It is always inclusive and open for all to embark on. I had the opportunity to study intensely with Kim Bears Bailey who teaches the Lester Horton technique at the University of the Arts. She stands tall as a black dancer and educator, opening the space for all to embark on this journey, leaving the space for possibilities for the student to emerge and awaken. I remember a few moments in class where she would speak to the students with so much care about their individual bodies. Learning each student and how they work and operate. Another professor named Tommie Waheed Evans teaches a modern jazz class that creates a space for exploration. We enter the classroom feeling one way then leave the class feeling so rewarded and refreshed. The progressions in his class took you to another place. Our spirits were felt in the studio, the sense of community that was built from the beginning felt safe. In these spaces I believe that these teachers like others speak to the spirit of the body. They push you not only physically but within yourself there becomes a process of change that erupts like a volcano. Ready to shake, rumble, spark into what else we can do. I bring these examples into the play of black freedom dancing because these two teachers explore and nurture the artist to be more than!

To be in.

To be in spirit.

To feel all the things around me.

To feel the earth we connect to, the ground we speed over.

To feel the sun's rays on my melanated skin I must reveal my soul to the universe.

Pushing me, pulling me, leaning me toward the truth of movement!

This truth lies beneath my dark skin.

The SAME skin kissed by God himself has been

Ridiculed, gawked at smacked at even hung and chased at.

For being just that.

Black!

How can the black body be viewed as the hero and the villain at the same time? Without even knowing it!

But yet they feed us these pipeline dreams to keep us caged and controlled so we don't understand our truth.

Our truth, our right, Our divine order.

The real beauty of being the sun child

Beaming and radiating in any space or time.

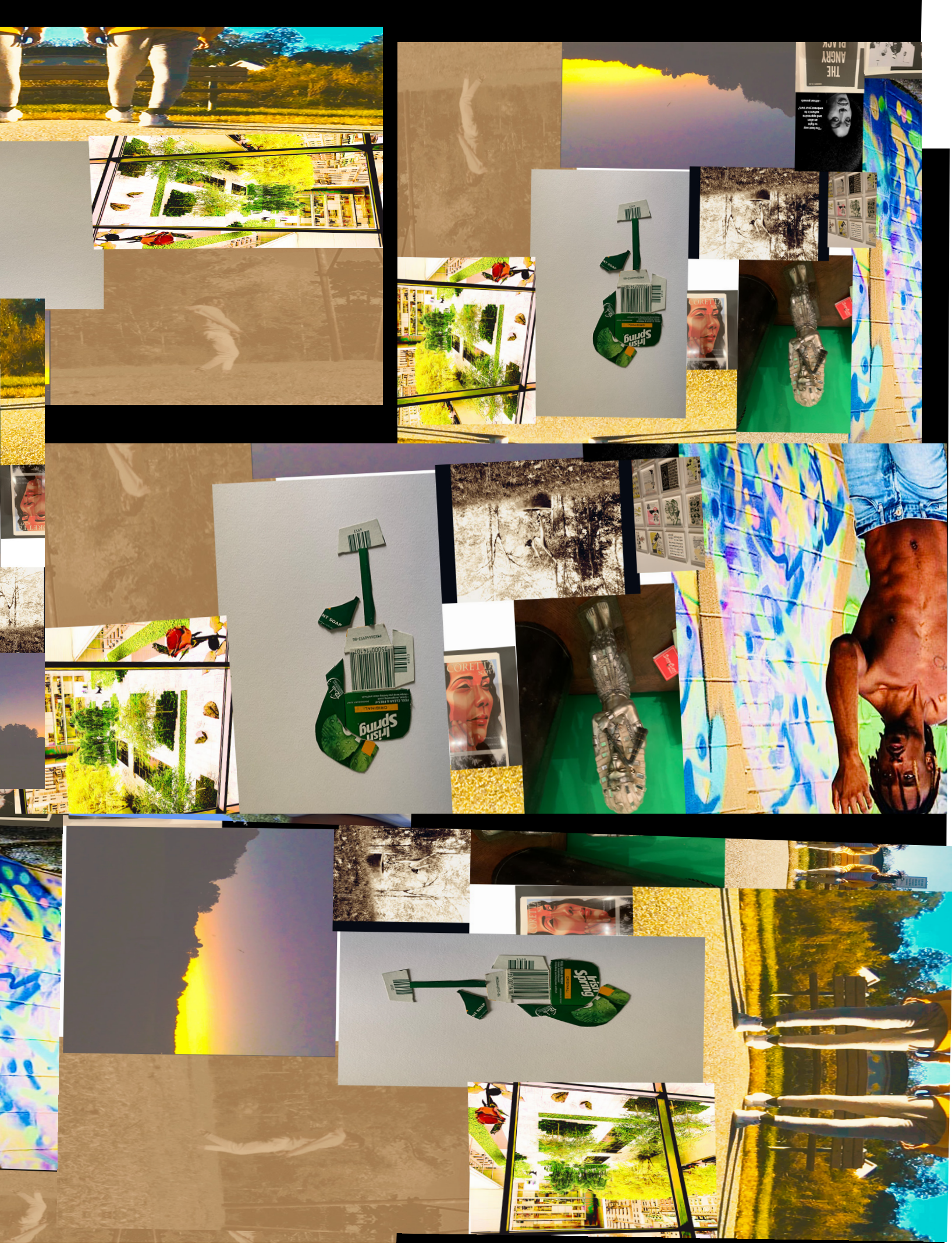
And yet we dance.

Life's dance.

Life's dance, life's heartbeat.

This black body speaks.
This black body listens.
The black body.
The.
Black.
Body.
Has something to say.
So
To be in.
Means to:
Breathe.
Stand tall.
Flow.
Live.





WHAT IS CHANGE:

F-E-A-R

Forget Everything And
Run

Face Everything And
Rise.

The choice becomes
yours.



Choice

Forget Everything And
RUN



Choice

Face Everything And Rise

My work:

I entered the garden.

Walking, running, jumping through the array of flowers around me.

Embracing the cool breeze running down my back.

Gazing at the stream. Listening to the push and pull of the stream flowing.

I began to embody the water. Finding ways that my body could relate to this
flow.

My arms push and pull imitating the flow of the water. My feet stay planted
like

The bold rock in the middle of the stream.

I took a breath connecting and becoming one with the air.

I closed my eyes to listen to the birds sing into the winds.

I began to humm and harmonize with the birds.

I started walking closer to the secret garden.

I entered the garden willingly! Hoping that
my thoughts would manifest into physical movement.

So I waited. I waited for the moment to arrive.

I waited so that I could be free!

The moment arrived and I felt freedom, joy, exhaustion.

My heart racing in this moment of truth.

This moment right here.

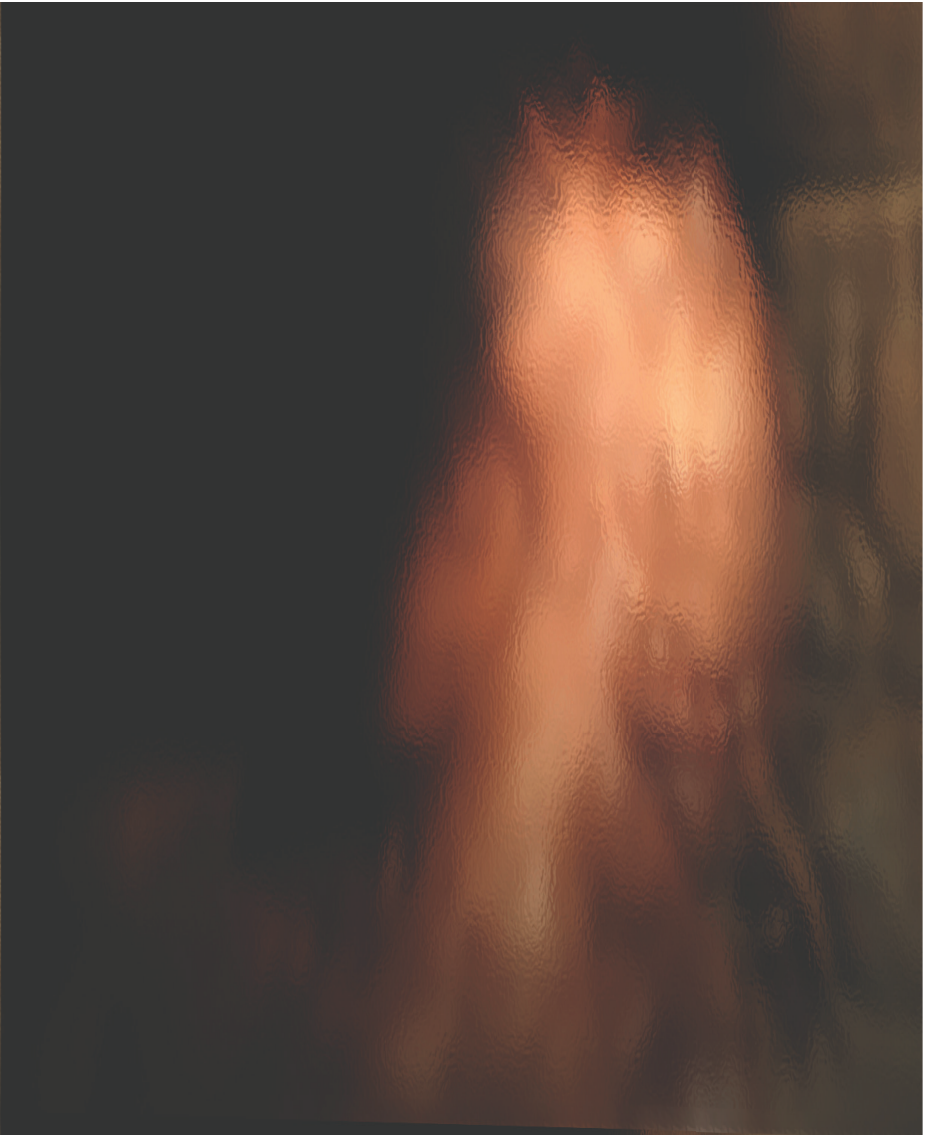
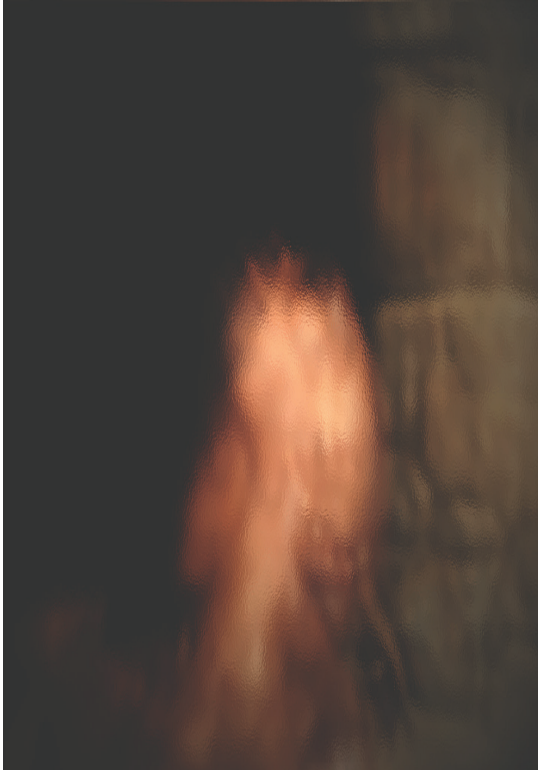
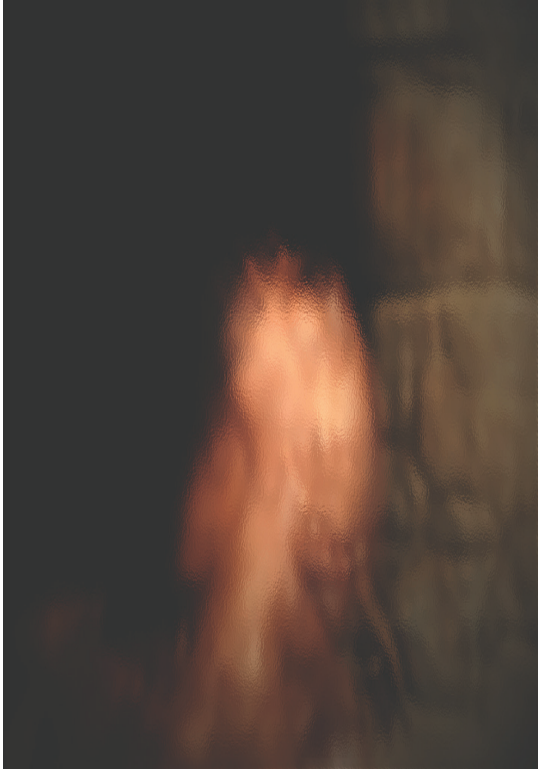
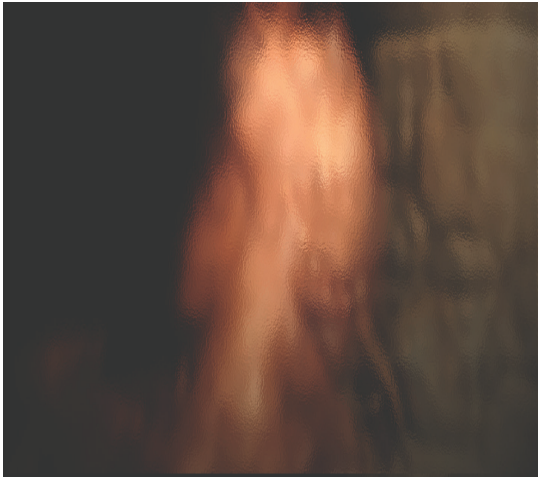
In this moment I choose

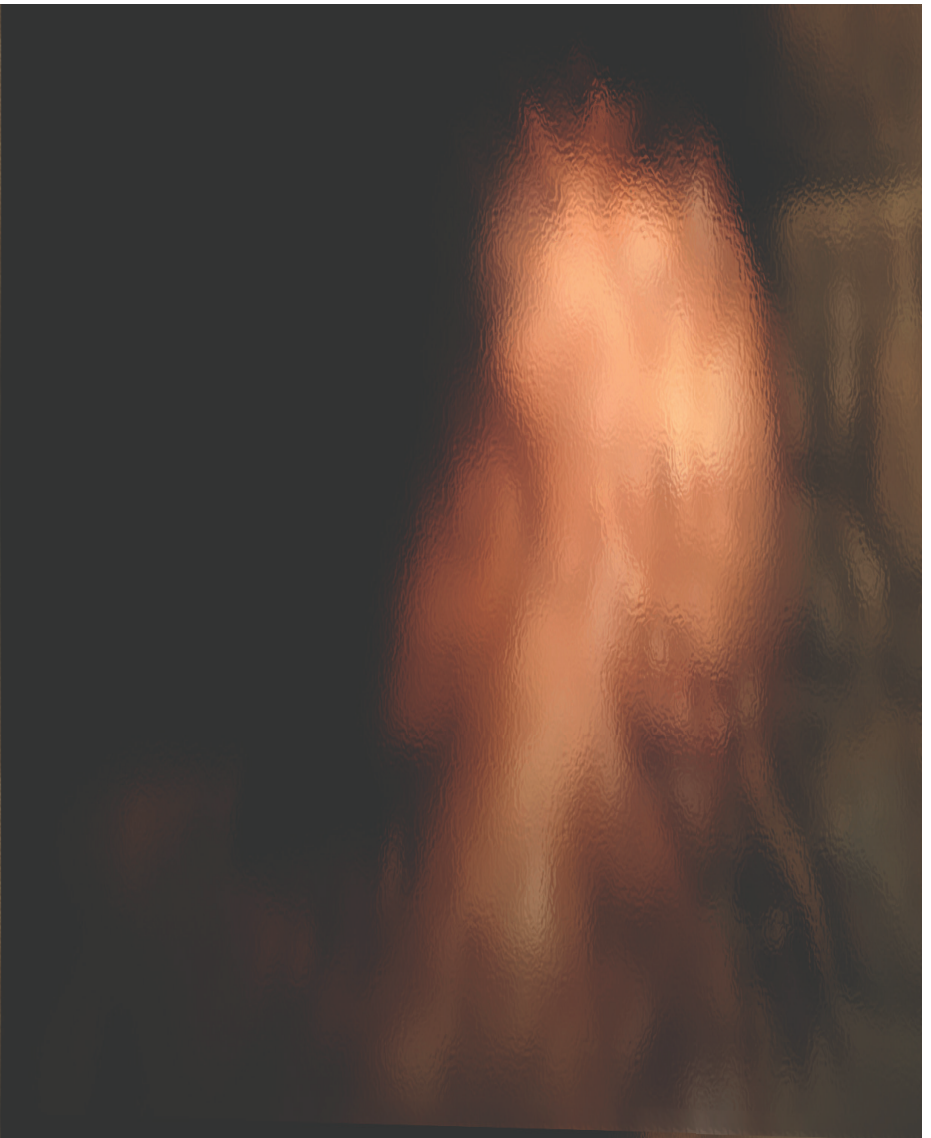
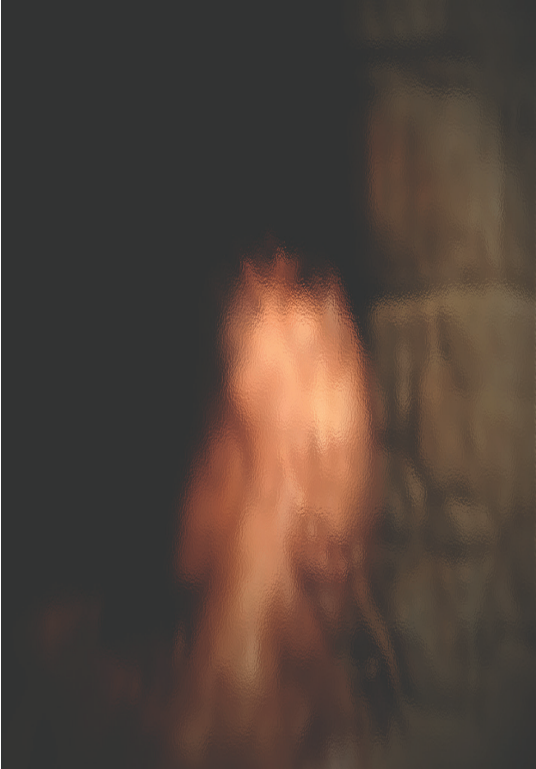
To become free. Free like the wind.

Shifting and shaping between the trees.

Commanding the space. I am Free.







Illustrations

| | |
|-------|---|
| Cover | Melvin Sutton walking to bench at 26, 2020 North Carolina |
| 2-3 | Melvin Sutton sitting on bench at 26, 2020 North Carolina |
| 6-7 | Pilot Mountain State Park Trails at 26, 2020 North Carolina |
| 9 | Melvin M Sutton dancing at Salem Lake Trails North Carolina |
| 10-11 | Melvin Sutton & ShotbyShakur random wall North Carolina |
| 13 | Melvin Sutton running shot at Nuse river trail North Carolina |
| 14 | Collage edit by Melvin Sutton 2021 |
| 19 | Collage edited by Melvin Sutton 2021 |
| 21 | Photo edit by Melvin Sutton 2021 |
| 23 | Photo edit by Melvin Sutton 2021 |
| 24-25 | Photo of garden at NYC Art Museum 2019 |
| 26-27 | Tomorrow Hello Yesterday's Goodbye photo 2020 |
| 29 | Anderson Point Park trail photo 2020 |
| 30-31 | Lake Johnson Park photo 2020 |
| 35 | Anderson Point Park 2020 |
| 36-37 | Video collage edit by Melvin Sutton 2021 |
| 40-41 | Photo edit by Melvin Sutton 2021 |
| 42-43 | Dr. Brenda Dixon Gottschild interview NYU 2017 |
| 48-49 | Photo collage edit by Melvin Sutton 2021 |
| 52-53 | Anderson Point Park video edit by Melvin |
| 55 | 1401 video edit by Melvin Sutton 2021 |
| 56-57 | ShotbyShakur edited by Melvin Sutton 2021 |

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